

**New Shoreham Town Council
Budget Work Session
Town Hall, Old Town Road, Block Island
Wednesday, March 27, 2013
7:00 p.m.**

Present: First Warden Kimberley H. Gaffett, Second Warden Kenneth C. Lacoste, Town Councilor Sean McGarry, Town Councilor Norris Pike, Town Councilor Christopher Warfel. Also present were Town Manager Nancy O. Dodge and Finance Director Amy Land. Town Clerk Fiona Fitzpatrick was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

First Warden Gaffett called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The next budget hearing will be Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

School: Present for the School were Superintendent Hicks and School Committee members William Padien, Elizabeth Connor and Ann Hall. The school request is reflected in its entirety in the budget, an increase of \$83,872, just below 2%.

Superintendent Hicks answered questions about the budget. He said revenue is stable with an additional \$9,500 expected in state aid. He said the School's operational increase is about \$72,000 in three areas: a new student with a specific need, step increases of \$33,000, and increased retirement contribution of \$21,000.

A full-time principal will eliminate one part-time principal position. The second part time principal will be reduced to about one-third time. The principal coverage is needed because unrolling the new curriculum requires extensive coordination, travel and training on the mainland. The superintendent's hours will also be decreased. Travel costs will decrease but housing costs will remain the same.

Mr. McGarry spoke adamantly against the full-time principal position: the person has no experience; the full-time position is an extra expense to the Town because it will require the payment of health-care and retirement benefits.

Briefly discussed:

- Security needs and security grant application
- Allocation of 2% of the school budget for energy cost savings because the school is the most expensive town-owned building to run.
- Options to use school's 3.25% reserve or town's capital plan for lift, roof, façade, and solar panels

Community Support:

Increase to Medical Center:

BIHS Executive Director Barbara Baldwin and board members Kay Lewis and Pam Hinthorn were present. The BIHS request was \$162,800, funding has been budgeted at \$123,800. Ms. Baldwin reported donation income decreased. BIHS has been funded at \$86,800 for the past five years. The cost for transition to electronic medical records is not reflected in the medical center's operating budget because it is a capital expense. Under the Affordable Health Care Act, there are incentives for the transition and penalties are assessed if the transition is not made within the Act's timeframe.

Discussion:

- Donations may increase again next year
- Medicare reimbursements may be better in 2014
- The BIHS has new fundraising ideas
- BIHS will take the shortfall from the endowment fund this year and work to raise more funds next year

Block Island Volunteer Fire Department

Greta Heinz was present from the Rescue Squad. The item will be considered at the next budget session when representatives from the Fire Department are present.

- Mr. Wafel offered to confer with BIVFD regarding modifications that would allow the rescue barn to operate during power outages

Washington County Regional Planning Commission

Request from Mr. Warfel to increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500. WCCP requested \$3,000.

South Shore Mental Health Center

Request from Mr. Lacoste to increase to \$1,000.

Senior Advisory Committee:

Gail Pierce and Sandra Kelly were present for the Senior Advisory Committee, which requested \$16,725 and was level funded at last year's \$5,000. The Senior Coordinator has worked beyond budgeted hours to organize activities for seniors in support of their physical and mental health. There was a discussion of the ways funds are collected and dispersed.

BI Early Learning Center

Board members Roberta Closter, Greta Heinz, Lisa Schaller, and Stacy Henshaw were present. The ELC requested \$98,600 and was funded at \$90,000. The board members explained fundraising, tuition and town support pay for operational expenses, the additional \$8,600 request is for improvements required for accreditation including playground reconfiguration and computer upgrades. Fees were increased in 2010 and are revisited annually. The ELC had a substantial increase in Town funding in 2013, this year funding was decreased 9% from 2013.

Coast Guard Facility:

Marc Tillson was present for the Station house, boat house, motor pool with apartments, and Chief's house. Emergency repairs were required in 2012. The Planning Board has recommended the installation of alternative water line in 2018. Marc Tillson was present and explained the well is behind Champlin's Marina. A water line was run from the well to the Coast Guard station in the 1950's along the shore. The line has been repaired multiple times. He suggests drilling a well upland near the Anderson or Kern property about half a mile from the station, and running a line under the road to the Coast Guard Station.

Highways

Highways Superintendent Mike Shea was present. Dustkill will not be used, so more road material, man hours, and machines will be required. Repairs to the state garage are funded by the state.

Building Official

Building Official Marc Tillson was present. He believes there will be a little shortfall in building permits. He recommends an increase of building permit fees 10% from the mid- through high-level permits. Each single family dwelling permit would increase about \$1,000. New housing starts are down.

Recreation Department

Recreation Director Rob Closter was present.

- The budget includes an acting Recreation Director for the summer
- Discussion regarding whether to absorb Senior activities into the Recreation Department
- Heinz Field maintenance issues were discussed

The Recreation Director proposed a change to the budget as follows:

- Three-quarter time year round employee was requested to maintain and mow the field during the summer, and assist with recreation programming and paperwork in the winter
- The position would allow an additional half marathon in April and an additional triathlon which would bring in approximately \$25,000 in revenues, more than the cost of the additional employee

The Town Manager spoke against the request, saying adding an employee position predicated on a skill set of field maintenance and clerical work was unrealistic.

At 10:20 a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lacoste and seconded by Mr. Pike.

Ayes: 5 (Gaffett, Lacoste, McGarry, Pike, Warfel)

Nays: 0

Minutes approved June 5, 2013

Fiona Fitzpatrick, Town Clerk